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AUTHOR Thomlison, T. Dean
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ABSTRACT

In order to empirically examine the impact of an overseas study experience on university students from the United States, a study of all University of Evansville students from a one-year period who had participated in an overseas study program in England was undertaken. The study used a four-part survey questionnaire designed to address specific issues related to factors such as behaviors, attitudes, interests, knowledge, and awareness levels. The total number of students returning the questionnaire was 174, a response rate of 89%. Standard analyses were conducted using a statistical package to determine frequency distributions and means. Non-parametric analysis was used to locate any statistically significant differences in responses based on sex, or amount of travel during the semester. P-values were adjusted using the Bonferroni method. Substantial changes were reported in attitudes, specific knowledge levels, beliefs, values, behaviors, open-mindedness, personal growth, and general appreciation of other cultures. Suggestions are made in terms of implications for further research, development of orientation programs, the relationship between changes in variables and gender, and the relationship between changes in variables and the amount of travel during the semester. The report presents the data in numerous tables and provides 19 references. (JB)

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Effects of a Study-Abroad Program on University Students: Toward a Predictive Theory of Intercultural Contact

T. Dean Thomlison

University of Evansville

Evansville, Indiana

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Abstract

The "contact hypothesis" posits there is a relationship between intercultural contact and attitude change. Claims abound regarding the virtues of study-abroad programs for university students among the many institutions offering these educational/travel adventures. However, relatively little empirical research has been conducted to verify those claims. This research examines the impact of an overseas study experience in England on university students from the United States using forty-five variables. Substantial changes were reported on attitudes, specific knowledge levels, beliefs, values, behaviors, open-mindedness, personal growth, and general appreciation of other cultures. Variable clusters are discussed and suggestions made in terms of implications for contact hypothesis theory building, further research, development of orientation programs, the relationship between changes in variables and gender, and the relationship between changes in variables and the amount of travel during the semester.

Effects of a Study-Abroad Program on University Students: 3

Toward a Predictive Theory of Intercultural Contact

Cross-cultural contact is increasing at a rapid pace. This is in part due to developments in transportation, mass communication technology, growing awareness of the interdependence of all inhabitants of Earth, the emergence of huge multinational corporations, concerns for global survival ranging from nuclear war to depletion of the world's natural resources, cultural exchange programs, international trade agreements, movement of manufacturing corporations to countries with inexpensive and large labor pools, and changes in the world economy. Another area of increased intercultural exposure is the ever growing number of educational exchange and study-abroad programs.

Claims abound regarding the virtues of these overseas programs which combine studies and travel. Proponents often state that participants receiving intercultural exposure will have marked increases in world-mindedness and open-mindedness. There is in fact growing evidence that educational exchanges involving students staying with host families result in significant movement in a broad range of characteristics. For example, Hansel studied changes in personal characteristics among high school students who participated in overseas homestay programs and found substantial change on ten of the seventeen factors examined (Hansel & Grove, 1986). The five categories with the greatest amounts of change were: (1) Awareness and Appreciation of Host Country and Culture; (2) Foreign Language Appreciation and Ability; (3) Understanding Other Cultures; (4) International Awareness; and (5) Adaptability. Other research on the effects of intercultural homestays on the host families and the participants support the general conclusion that personal growth changes do result from this type of living experience (Brislin, 1981; Hansel, 1985; Kauffman, 1983; Lowe, Askling, & Bates, 1984).

Numerous studies have also been conducted to determine the effects of traveling abroad on personality development of youngsters in areas such as world-mindedness, values construction, self-reliance, ethnocentrism, self-confidence, independence, and many other factors. Attitude change has likewise been examined with sometimes contradictory findings, but most of this research upholds the belief that attitudes and perceptions do change as a result of homestay-study programs in other countries (Hansel, 1984; Stewart, 1976; Steinkalk & Taft, 1979; Neimeyer & Fukuyama, 1984; Smith, 1951; Hoffman & Zai, 1969; Klineberg & Hull, 1979; Mestenhauser, 1983; Sharma & Jung, 1985).

Information related to the effects of study-abroad programs for university students is less clear. Although the tradition of students traveling to other countries to study has a long history, after World War II a dramatic increase in the number of overseas-study programs took place. A large number of American universities now offer study-abroad programs at their own overseas centers or have reciprocal arrangements with universities located in various countries. Baker (1983) found that a semester abroad program offered by Brigham Young University resulted in significant effects on interests in international affairs, appreciation of other cultures, awareness of home culture, communication skills, self-confidence, and interests in various subjects. In an earlier study, Smith (1985) noted very little change in attitudes like ethnocentrism, world-mindedness, authoritarianism and belief in the democratic process when the students were abroad for less than six months. There are a limited number of studies devoted to examining changes in attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, values and behaviors resulting from these intercultural experiences and almost no examination of the relationship between changes

in specific variables (attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, etc.) and other characteristics such as demographics (gender, etc.) or activities undertaken during the study-abroad experience (amount of travel, etc.).

William Gudykunst indicates there is research support for the "contact hypothesis," which claims there is a relationship between intercultural contact and attitude change, but he cautions there are major shortcomings with much of the research prior to 1977. In his review of the research literature, Gudykunst suggests several major content areas which should be researched and states: "in developing a theory of intercultural contact it will be important to determine whether the direction and/or the intensity of attitudes are influenced by contact" (Gudykunst, 1977, p. 10). The following study was designed to partially answer this question by determining the amount and direction of change in selected variables, as well as add to this general body of knowledge in order to contribute to the building of a predictive theory of intercultural contact which will explain some of the relationships between variables.

PROCEDURES

This paper presents the findings of a year-long study of the impact of an overseas study experience (semester) on a variety of personal growth dimensions for undergraduate students. The study was designed to examine the degree of change on forty-five specific dimensions such as appreciation of people unlike oneself, stereotypes, eating and dress habits, appreciation of home culture, understanding of host culture and customs, feelings of patriotism, and strengthening of one's own values--to name a few. In addition, other information on behaviors, program assessment, and demographics were also secured.

The study involved the surveying of all American students attending Harlaxton College during the 1988-1989 academic year. This overseas campus for the University of Evansville is located in Harlaxton, England (Lincolnshire). Extensive intercultural contact was made possible through planned and informal travel opportunities throughout Great Britain and Europe, by the large percentage of English faculty and the international students attending the college. An average of 26% of the students at Harlaxton College were from countries other than the United States and seventeen different countries were represented by these students.

Consideration of existing approaches for determining attitude change such as the Q-sort methodology used by Sell and Craig (Sell, 1980), the Cultural Attitudes Repertory Technique (CART) of Neimeyer and Fukuyama (1985), and the world-mindedness Attitudes Scale of Sampson and Smith (1957) resulted in the conclusion that a different type of instrument was necessary because of the variety of dimensions to be surveyed and the need to determine the degree and direction of change.

The survey questionnaire was designed to address specific issues related to factors such as behaviors, attitudes, interests, knowledge, and awareness levels. Content items were solicited from faculty who had previously taught and students who had previously studied at Harlaxton College. In addition, topics which were consistently used in other research on the effects of intercultural contact were isolated. The resulting survey instrument was composed of four parts:

(1.) Part One consisted of forty-five statements which indicated directionality on a subject area. A Likert-type scale

requested the respondent to mark each according to the following: "0" for no change; "1" for a slight increase in the direction indicated; "2" for moderate increase in direction indicated; and "3" for a strong increase in the direction indicated.

(2.) Part Two included five agree/disagree statements related to behaviors with non-Americans while overseas, whether they felt adequately prepared for the study-abroad experience, and their overall reaction to the program.

(3.) Part Three requested demographic information such as amount of travel during the semester, age, sex and university affiliation.

(4.) Part Four provided an opportunity for open-ended comments on the experience.

A copy of the survey questionnaire was mailed to each American student attending Harlaxton College immediately following the semester they participated in the program (either Fall of 1988 or Spring of 1989). The return rate was very high: 89% overall return (95% for Fall of 1988 and 83% for Spring of 1989). A follow-up letter to initial non-respondents encouraged participation and helped to maximize the number responding. (The high return rate is in itself an interesting form of feedback about the program.)

The total number of students returning questionnaires was 174. The Fall and Spring responses were combined after a non-parametric analysis (chi-square) indicated only one statistically significant difference in the two sets of responses. The exception was on the question regarding an increase in interest in art forms such as music, art, and theatre. The Spring 1989 group had an increase (2.47) greater than that of the Fall 1988 group (1.78), and

the difference was found to be statistically significant. On all other factors the two groups had no statistically significant differences in levels of change, so it was deemed appropriate to combine the two groups into one population (n=174).

Standard analyses were conducted using the SPSS statistical package to determine frequency distributions and means. Non-parametric analysis was used to locate any statistically significant differences in responses based on sex, or amount of travel during the semester. The p-values were adjusted using the Bonferroni method in order to control the type I error rate.

Findings

The frequency distribution and mean for responses to the forty-five statements in Part One of the questionnaire are ranked in Table 1 in the order of largest to smallest amount of indicated change as determined by means. As stated earlier, respondents were asked to select either 0, 1, 2, or 3 to show the degree of change in the direction indicated as a result of their Harlaxton study-abroad experience. Thirty of the forty-five means were above 2.00 on the 0-to-3 scale, which indicates extensive change. The greatest change reported was for increased confidence in traveling abroad, while the least amount of change was reported on the way respondents dress (72 respondents stated no change took place on this dimension).

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Table 2 presents the frequency distributions for the five agree/disagree statements in Part Two of the questionnaire. As the table shows, all but one person responding felt the overall experience was a positive and beneficial one. There was considerable activity in helping non-Americans understand

Table 1

Means and Frequency Distribution

Dimensions (By Amount of Change)	Mean by Rank	Frequency Distribution (n = 174) (0) No Change	(1) Slight Increase	(2) Moderate Increase	(3) Strong Increase
Confidence in traveling abroad	2.86	1	1	19	153
Sense of personal independence	2.76	1	4	31	138
Understanding of life in England	2.76	0	3	36	135
Desire to travel overseas	2.75	6	6	13	149
Appreciation of other cultures	2.68	3	10	27	134
Ability to cope with new & different surroundings	2.67	3	5	38	128
Understanding of life in other countries in general	2.63	2	5	49	118
Greater self-confidence in general	2.53	5	5	56	108
Appreciation of American luxuries	2.52	9	16	24	125
Interest in world issues	2.49	7	10	47	110

table continued

Table 1

Means and Frequency Distribution

Dimensions (By Amount of Change)	Mean by Rank	(0) No Change	(1) Slight Increase	(2) Moderate Increase	(3) Strong Increase
Friendships with people from other countries	2.49	1	27	32	114
Knowledge of other countries	2.48	0	11	69	94
Level of open-mindedness toward other cultures	2.46	5	16	47	106
Attention to media coverage of international events	2.45	6	15	48	105
Condidence in relating to people of other countries	2.38	1	19	67	87
Concern about international terrorism	2.33	11	19	45	99
Appreciation of international students	2.32	9	21	49	95
Understanding of geography	2.32	7	24	49	94
Awareness of United States culture and customs	2.29	9	15	67	83
Understanding of life in Western European countries	2.29	3	21	73	77
Understanding of customs in other countries	2.28	4	19	75	76

table continued

Table 1

Means and Frequency Distribution

Dimensions (By Amount of Change)	Mean by Rank	(0) No Change	(1) Slight Increase	(2) Moderate Increase	(3) Strong Increase
More tolerant of people differnent from myself	2.25	13	25	41	95
Understanding of world political issues	2.24	3	19	86	66
Appreciation of U.S. human services (health care,.)	2.22	12	27	46	89
Understanding of British education system	2.16	6	26	77	65
Awareness of social class systems	2.13	5	27	82	60
Changed ideas about "foreigners" in positive direction	2.06	17	29	55	73
Awareness of dress as a refelction of one's culture	2.04	10	39	59	66
Interest in art forms (music, art theatre, etc.)	2.01	15	37	53	69
Interest in world economic conditions	2.01	8	37	75	54
Awareness of policies, practices and life in U.S.	1.97	8	36	83	47
Strengthened my values	1.97	17	32	65	60

table continued

Table 1

Means and Frequency Distribution

Dimensions (By Amount of Change)	Mean by Rank	(0) No Change	(1) Slight Increase	(2) Moderate Increase	(3) Strong Increase
Lessened my stereotypes of people in general	1.95	13	42	60	59
More patriotic	1.90	32	28	39	75
Interest in world social concerns (hunger, etc.)	1.89	11	39	82	42
Belief "American way" is the only effective way	1.89	21	34	63	56
Lessened my stereotypes of international students	1.86	24	30	66	54
Lessened my stereotypes of the British people	1.82	21	39	64	50
Appreciation of American System of higher education	1.79	28	35	56	55
Modified my values	1.49	35	54	49	36
Interest in ethnic religions	1.47	30	64	48	32
Concern about nuclear warheads in Europe	1.26	51	56	38	29
Belief that the "American way" is the best way	1.16	72	36	32	34

table continued

Table 1

Means and Frequency Distribution

Dimensions (By Amount of Change)	Mean by Rank	(0) No Change	(1) Slight Increase	(2) Moderate Increase	(3) Strong Increase
Changed my eating habits	1.00	67	56	35	16
Changed the way I dress	0.93	72	52	41	9

Note: The higher the mean the greater the amount of reported change.

aspects of United States culture and language usage. Overall, the students felt they were prepared for their experience abroad. (78%)

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

Table 3 presents the frequency distribution on the amount of travel reported by each student during their study-abroad experience on Part Three of the questionnaire. The average age of respondents was 20.59 (20 years and seven months). Sex distribution for respondents was 119 females and 55 males. The respondents attended thirty-four different American colleges and universities covering all geographic regions of the United States.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

Two crosstabulations were completed in order to determine (1) the relationship between responses for each of fifty statements and the amount of travel during the semester; and (2) the relationship between the gender of a respondent and their response to the fifty statements. As part of this procedure, the chi square test of statistical significance was performed. Because the relatively small sample size resulted in cells with fewer than five cases in most of the contingency tables, no statistically significant dimensions were identified for the "Amount of Travel" crosstabulations, but there was a consistent pattern of respondents who had traveled extensively indicating very strong increases on several dimensions. For example, 70% or more of those who traveled extensively marked a strong increase on the following dimensions:

Understanding of life in other countries in general (70%)

Understanding of life in England (78%)

Appreciation of other cultures (77%)

Table 2

Agree/Disagree Responses to Statements

Statements	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
During my overseas experence, I helped non-Americans understand United States customs (holidays, traditions, habits, etc.).	168 (96%)	7 (4%)
During my overseas experience, I helped non-Americans work on their English usage (pronumciation, meaning of words, etc.).	128 (74%)	28 (26%)
During my overseas experience, I helped non-Americans understand United States social and/or political issues.	150 (86%)	24 (14%)
I feel I was adequately prepared to participate in the Harlaxton study-abroad program.	136 (78%)	38 (22%)
Overall, my experience at Harlaxton was a positive and beneficial one.	173 (99.4%)	1 (0.6%)

NOTE: n=174

Table 3

Amount of Travel During Semester

None		Small		Fair		Large	
n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)	n	(%)
1	(1%)	5	(3%)	49	(28%)	119	(68%)

Sense of personal independence (79%)

Ability to cope with new and different surroundings (75%)

Number of friendships with people from other countries (70%)

Desire to travel overseas (88%)

Confidence in traveling abroad (94%)

Appreciation of American luxuries (73%)

These findings indicate a strong relationship between the amount of travel and the dimensions listed here.

The second crosstabulation which examined gender and each dimension located several statistically significant correlations. Table 4 presents the nine items on which there were significant differences between how males and females responded to the questionnaire. Females reported a strong increase twice as often as males on the following dimensions: concern about nuclear warheads in Europe, strengthened my values, lessened my stereotypes of people in general, appreciation of the American system of higher education, concern for international terrorism, and awareness of policies, practices and life in the U.S. Males reported no change twice as often as females on these dimensions: concern about nuclear warheads in Europe, appreciation of the American system of higher education, changed my eating habits, and awareness of policies, practices and life in the U.S. Even more interesting, males marked no change in concern for international terrorism nine times more often than the females in the survey, no change on world issues twelve times more often than the female respondents, and no change on interest in social concerns six times more often than females.

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

Table 4

Statistically Significant Crosstabulations For Gender

Dimension:	X^2
Concern about nuclear warheads in Europe.	(.0571)
Strengthened my values.	(.0293)
Lessened my stereotypes of people in general.	(.0320)
Appreciation of the American system of higher education.	(.0036)
Interest in world issues.	(.0234)
Interest in world social concerns (hunger, population, etc.).	(.0402)
Concern about international terrorism.	(.0005)
Changed my eating habits.	(.0146)
Awareness of policies, practices, and life in the U.S.	(.0359)

$p < .05$; $F(1, 174)$

Prior to conducting the survey, the forty-five dimensions in Part One of the questionnaire were categorized according to similarity groupings. Table 5 provides a comparison of the means for each dimension in these clusters. These "dimension clusters" were selected on the basis of natural categories

INSERT TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

which emerged from the survey items and were not developed from statistical correlations between dimensions based on analysis. Several of these clusters were adapted from the category system developed by Bettina Hansel and Neal Grove (1986) for a study of the AFS International/Intercultural student exchange program. The individual means for each dimension in a cluster were averaged to produce an overall mean for each cluster. Table 5 presents these clusters starting with the highest "cluster mean" and moving toward the lowest overall "cluster mean". The higher the mean, the greater amount of change reported by the respondents.

The open-ended comments from Part Four of the questionnaire were listed verbatim in summary form. Of the 174 respondents, 125 offered statements about their overseas experience on the open-ended question which solicited their comments. Although no detailed content analysis is currently planned on this data, it will be used internally to make refinements in a variety of areas related to the planning, orientation and operation of this study-abroad program. The comments were predominantly positive. Typical samples include the following:

> "It was the greatest time of my life, and I am grateful for the chance I had to travel and learn."
>
> "A truly wonderful experience. One that I would

Table 5

Dimension Clusters

Mean Rank	Dimension	Mean
	CLUSTER (Cluster Mean)	
	PERSONAL GROWTH (2.66)	
1	Confidence in traveling abroad	2.86
2	Sense of personal independence	2.76
4	Desire to travel overseas	2.75
6	Ability to cope with new and different surroundings	2.67
8	Greater self-confidence in general	2.53
15	Confidence in relating to people from other countries	2.38
	APPRECIATION OF OTHER CULTURES (2.39)	
5	Appreciation of other cultures	2.68
7	Understanding of life in other countries in general	2.63
12	Knowledge of other countries	2.48
17	Appreciation of international students	2.32
20	Understanding of life in Western European countries	2.29
21	Understanding of customs in other countries	2.28
28	Awareness of dress as a reflection of one's culture	2.04
	APPRECIATION OF HOST CULTURE (2.25)	
3	Understanding of life in England	2.76
25	Understanding of British education system	2.16
38	Lessened my stereotypes of the British people	1.82

table continued

Table 5

Dimension Clusters

Mean Rank	Dimension	Mean
	CLUSTER (Cluster Mean)	
	INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS (2.08)	
10	Interest in world issues	2.49
16	Concern about international terrorism	2.33
18	Understanding of geography	2.32
23	Understanding of world political issues	2.24
26	Awareness of social class systems	2.13
30	Interest in world economic conditions	2.01
35	Interest in world social concerns (hunger, population, etc.)	1.89
42	Concern about nuclear warheads in Europe	1.26
	OPEN MINDEDNESS (2.01)	
13	Level of open-mindedness toward other cultures	2.46
37	Lessened my stereotypes of international students	1.87
22	More tolerant of people different from myself	2.25
27	Changed my ideas about "foreigners" in positive direction	2.06
29	Interest in art forms (music, art, theatre, etc.)	2.01
33	Lessened my stereotypes of people in general	1.95
41	Interest in ethnic religions	1.47

table continued

Table 5

Dimension Clusters

Mean Rank	Dimension	Mean
	CLUSTER (Cluster Mean)	
	APPRECIATION OF HOME CULTURE (1.98)	
9	Appreciation of American luxuries	2.52
19	Awareness of United States culture and customs	2.29
24	Appreciation of U.S. human services (health care, etc.)	2.22
31	Awareness of policies, practices, and life in the U.S.	1.97
36	Belief "American Way" is the only effective way	1.89
39	Appreciation of American system of higher education	1.79
43	Belief that the "American Way" is the best way	1.16
	VALUES (1.79)	
32	Strengthened my values	1.97
34	More patriotic	1.90
40	Modified my values	1.49
	BEHAVIOR (1.72)	
11	Friendships with people from other countries	2.49
14	Attention to media coverage of international events	2.45
44	Changed my eating habits	1.00
45	Changed the way I dress	.93

Note: The higher the mean the greater the amount of reported change.

> definitely recommend to anyone with a desire to travel abroad and make some of the best friends that they will ever have."
>
> "Harlaxton was one of the greatest experiences I've ever had. I feel I learned more in the last semester than I have in the past 3 years of college."

Negative comments mostly involved problems related to living arrangements, lack of advanced information on various topics such as amount of money needed, classes, faculty, regulations, grades, and administration. Typical examples include the following:

> "I think that the opportunity and cost of traveling should be more stressed to future students of Harlaxton. I also think it should be clearly stated to future students that weekend trips sponsored by the school are not included in the tuition."
>
> "I don't think it is fair that grades aren't released until after we return to the United States."
>
> "We soon settled in but several of us were complaining the first couple of weeks that we wished we would have been given the student handbook we received upon arrival before we left for England."

DISCUSSION

Based on the respondents' reports, this study indicates substantial changes occurred in attitudes, specific knowledge levels, beliefs, values, behaviors, open-mindedness, personal growth, and general appreciation of

other cultures. Each of the "dimension clusters" will be examined below to provide more specific information on Part One of the survey.

Personal Growth (2.66)

The personal growth category includes dimensions pertaining to the ability to adapt to new situations and development of interests, personal independence, and self-confidence. This cluster showed the highest overall increase in change based on a comparison of cluster means. Five of the top six means and three of the top four means are in this cluster. This is an overwhelming indicator that the greatest change or impact occurred on the items defined in this study as personal growth dimensions. As mentioned earlier, the greatest increase in change for the entire study came on the dimension of "Confidence in traveling abroad", followed by an increased "Sense of personal independence." As Table 4 illustrates, there was a strong increase (operationally defined as any mean above 2.00) in all dimensions related to general self-confidence, as well as confidence in coping with new surroundings, in relating to people from other countries, and traveling abroad. There was also a strong increase in the desire to travel overseas. This theme of increased personal autonomy and confidence is reinforced by the open-ended comments. Samples include:

> "The best informative, personal growing and developing experience in my life."
>
> "My 'Harlaxton Experience' is one I will always cherish and I really feel that it has been a very positive change in my life."
>
> "The most gratifying aspect relating to the Harlaxton

experience is becoming more acquainted with myself and my independence."

Appreciation of Other Cultures (2.39)

Interest in learning more about other countries, cultures, customs, and their peoples is included in the dimensions in this cluster. The dimension means show a large increase in appreciation of other customs and cultures, knowledge and understanding of life in other countries, and appreciation of international students. The cluster mean is the second highest average in the study, indicating substantial change on these dimensions resulted from the study-abroad program. Sample comments on the open-ended question such as the following support this conclusion:

"The education I got from being subjected to other cultures is absolutely priceless."

"You not only grow academically, but you grow culture-wise."

Appreciation of Host Culture (2.25)

This cluster includes dimensions related to understanding and appreciating the customs, life-style and people of the host country. The increase in understanding of life in England was the third highest change in the entire study. It would be expected based on prior studies and common sense that there would be a substantial increase on this dimension. This finding would appear to provide some internal validity for the study and correlates closely with the previously discussed cluster of appreciating other countries and cultures in general.

International Awareness (2.08)

The International Awareness dimensions deal with issues or subjects which

transcend specific countries and impact upon the international community. There was a marked increase in interest, understanding and awareness of world issues in general and of selected specific issues such as international terrorism, geography, social class systems, politics, and economic conditions. Although some change still occurred, there was less change on concern for social problems (hunger, population, etc.) and concern about nuclear warheads in Europe than on the other dimensions in this cluster.

Open-Mindedness (2.01)

This category includes an interest in and capacity to accept different views, attitudes, values, and life-styles, as well as reduce stereotypes. The greatest increases for this cluster took place on the dimensions of open-mindedness toward other cultures and being tolerant of people different from the respondent. There were also strong increases in respondents' positive views about "foreigners" and interest in art forms. Lessening of stereotypes also was reported, but to a smaller degree than most of the other dimensions in this cluster. The smallest dimension increase in this cluster was on interest in ethnic religions. Comments on the open-ended question such as the following help support the conclusion that substantial increase in open-mindedness occurred.

> "I believe that the more we interrelate with people of other cultures the sooner we will realize how alike we all really are, with similar needs. Also, we see how inappropriate stereotypes really are. Perhaps this is the first step toward a free and safe world."

> "The people I met at Harlaxton were even more special to me than the places I visited. My experience will be a treasured memory. As for distinguishing between Americans and non-Americans, we all realized towards the end of the semester that people are people no matter where you are and put our differences aside."

Appreciation of Home Culture (1.98)

This category is composed of dimensions related to understanding and/or appreciation of features of United States culture, customs and systems. The greatest increase (2.52) in this cluster was for appreciation of American luxuries. Strong increases also were reported in awareness of United States culture and customs, and appreciation of U.S. human services such as health care systems. There was moderate increase on the following three dimensions: "Awareness of policies, practices and life in the United States," "Belief that the 'American Way' is the only effective way," and "Appreciation of the American system of higher education." "Belief that the 'American Way' is the best way" received the third lowest change rating among the forty-five dimensions in the survey (1.16, 43 of 45). This item tied for the largest number of respondents (72) indicating "no change" in the entire study. This result suggests there may have been a strong decrease in ethnocentrism. The two "American Way" statements were included in the survey as a "reverse measure" of ethnocentrism and narrow-mindedness. Interestingly, the other item of this type ("Belief that the 'American way' is the only effective way") was given the moderate or strong increase by over 60% of the respondents. This would appear to say that although respondents are not sold on the idea

that the "American way" of doing things is the best way, they may see it as more effective than the alternative approaches to which they have been exposed. The open-ended comments support this conclusion and point to two extremes of either having developed a much greater appreciation for the United States of America or experiencing an eye opening experience that there are other ways to live that are very appealing. For example:

> "I loved it and can't wait to go back, but it really makes you appreciate the U.S. There's no place like home!"
>
> "Traveling overseas, especially in the U.S.S.R., made me much more appreciative of the U.S."
>
> "I substantially decreased my belief that the United States is the greatest country on earth and the only place I would want to live or travel in."

Values (1.79)

This cluster examines principles or standards which are central to an individual's belief system. It is acknowledged that this is a very small grouping and a very general indicator of changes in values. The mean for "Strengthened my values"(1.97) indicates a substantial amount of increase on this dimension. Of the 174 respondents, 125 marked either a moderate or a strong increase on this dimension. There was also a moderate increase in patriotism with 75 students noting a strong increase. Although there was a marked increase (1.49) on "Modified my values," there was a substantially greater impact on strengthening existing values than in altering or modifying them.

Behavior (1.72)

The dimensions in this cluster refer to specific actions which are observable. The number of friendships respondents have with people from other countries increased radically as a result of their study-abroad experience. Of the 174 students responding, 114 reported a strong increase on this item. There was also a very high increase in the amount of attention paid to media coverage of international events. The smallest amount of change in the entire study involved eating habits and the way respondents dress. Even so, the frequency distributions indicate there was some change on these dimensions.

According to the information summarized on Table 2, there was overwhelming evidence that the study-abroad experience was beneficial to the participants. The open-ended responses and the other findings in the study also point to the benefits of the program. The results of the agree/disagree statements also show that the students often helped non-Americans comprehend United States culture. This was especially high on helping non-Americans understand aspects of United States customs (96%) and social and/or political issues(86%). The comments on the open-ended question further indicate the significance placed on these informal interpersonal encounters as an important contributor of the overall personal growth they experienced.

The American students also reported they felt prepared for their study abroad experience, however it is unclear from the data whether respondents interpreted this question as a request for direct feedback regarding one orientation they received before attending or whether they interpreted it as a check on how prepared they were personally to have a study-abroad experience (i.e., academically prepared, emotionally mature enough, etc.).

The students from the three American institutions supplying the bulk of the students (66%) received extensive orientation and it is likely this group interpreted the question as an evaluation of those preparation efforts. The remainder received no formal orientation because they were dispersed throughout the United States at thirty-one different universities and colleges. This group most likely interpreted the question in more of a personal preparedness sense.

Interestingly, the three universities providing a majority of the students for this study-abroad program all have orientation programs but they are of different types. A total of 69% of the University of Evansville students reported they felt adequately prepared for the experience. Students from William Jewell College reported feeling prepared in 77% of the cases. 81% of the respondents from the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire agreed with the statement that they felt adequately prepared. The Evansville orientation consists of meeting once per week for ten weeks during the semester prior to attending Harlaxton College. These sessions are planned and overseen by the Coordinator of Harlaxton Admissions, although most of the 90-minute meetings are presented by selected faculty with expertise in specific aspects of British studies (literature, history, etc.). College credit is given for participation in the orientation program. The William Jewell orientation consists of four meetings with students and two meetings with parents and students in the months prior to going abroad. The Wisconsin program, which received the highest rating on preparation, consists of eight meetings with two faculty members during the semester prior to meeting. This is followed up by a one-hour meeting once per week during their semester in England, which is led by the same two faculty members. The participants in this

orientation on "British Life and Civilization" receive college credit for attending.

The crosstabulation to determine the relationship between amount of travel during the semester and each of the dimensions revealed strong relationships between those respondents traveling extensively and several dimensions such as understanding life in other countries (including England, of course), appreciation of other countries, sense of personal independence, ability to cope with new and different surroundings, number of friendships with people from other countries, desire to travel overseas, confidence in traveling abroad, and appreciation of American luxuries. There is a pattern of personal growth indicated in this list which parallels many of the dimensions included in the personal growth cluster in Table 5. Problems with cell size make it difficult to statistically isolate the most important dimensions in this regard, but it is clear from the percentages given in the findings section that those listed above are influenced by the amount of travel. Desire to travel overseas and confidence in traveling abroad are the dimensions influenced the most in positive directions by extensive travel, according to the crosstabulations.

Although more research is needed on this, apparently the very fact that one is in a different country and interacting daily with people from different cultures (international students, English faculty and administration, members of the community through frequent events such as special presentations to which the local community is invited, etc.) is sufficient to generate most of the changes in attitudes, beliefs, interests, knowledge, awareness, and so on as reported in the study. The results suggest additional travel does

increase one's understanding of life in specific cultures and provides more opportunities for interpersonal sharing of one's own culture, but substantial personal growth occurs even if little additional travel is included in the study-abroad program. It is suspected that international students played a major role in this finding. As one student commented on the open-ended question, "International students at Harlaxton add so much. . . Don't ever have all Americans at Harlaxton."

The other crosstabulation between gender and the dimensions found nine statistically significant differences on responses as presented in Table 4. Of these results the concern for international terrorism had the highest level of statistical significance (.0005). 66% of the females reported a strong increase in concern, compared with 38% of the males. When traditional sex roles are considered, it is unclear whether the results accurately reflect concern or admitted concern. All that can be said is that females reported a stronger increase in concern than did their male counterparts. Overall, respondents did indicate a marked increase in concern for terrorism (2.33). Another equally interesting finding from the crosstabulations was the male responses on amount of interest in world issues (no change reported twelve times more often than women) and world social concerns (no change reported six times more often than women). Caution should be exercised in interpreting these findings, since a response of "no change" in the direction indicated does not necessarily mean the males are not concerned about these issues. It only indicates they had less change in their level of interest than did the females. It could be argued, for example, that the males already had a high level of interest and therefore experienced less change

on these dimensions than on some other dimensions. These findings do raise some important questions about gender differences in cross-cultural experiences regarding the direction and extent of influence resulting from intercultural exposure. The data clearly show that females experienced more change than males on numerous dimensions. This area of research could be highly beneficial in designing future study-abroad programs which would maximize the learning process for both males and females. Very little research has been conducted in this area and this study illustrates a strong need for further examination of gender as a major intervening variable on direction and intensity of intercultural influence.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The contact hypothesis is strongly supported by this study and thus serves as one more step toward answering the question posited by Gudykunst regarding the influence of intercultural contact on direction and intensity of attitudes. Several specific observations, research recommendations and conclusions can be drawn from this study:

(1.) The study-abroad program resulted in substantial changes in attitudes, beliefs, levels of open-mindedness, behaviors, knowledge, interests and understanding.

(2.) The greatest overall area of change was on the personal growth dimensions such as increased self-confidence and independence, with confidence in traveling abroad showing the highest degree of change in the entire study. Although other results appear to agree with findings by Hansel, Baker, etc., (such as appreciation of other cultures, open-mindedness, etc.), the dominance of the

increase in personal growth dimensions has not been emphasized in prior studies. Further research is recommended on these and related variables to determine if students not studying abroad experience similar increases in personal growth.

(3.) There was a strong increase in understanding and appreciation of other countries and cultures, including the host country.

(4.) The study-abroad experience resulted in a substantial increase in international awareness.

(5.) There was a strong increase in open-mindedness, and a moderate decrease in stereotyping and ethnocentrism.

(6.) The study-abroad experience resulted in a substantial increase in appreciation of United States culture and patriotism while recognizing the "American way" is not necessarily the best or only way to do things.

(7.) Values were strengthened and modified during the study-abroad program, with a greater tendency toward strengthening existing values than modifying or changing values. The comparatively small amounts of change in stereotypes and values are worthy of special attention and require additional research. Women reported strong increases in strengthening of values nearly twice as often as did the male respondents.

(8.) This study-abroad experience had little or no effect on eating and dressing behaviors.

(9.) There was a strong behavioral increase in the number of

friendships with people of other countries and in the amount of attention given to media coverage of international events.

(10.) The more the students traveled, the more they aided non-Americans in understanding aspects of American culture.

(11.) The vast majority of students reported feeling adequately prepared for their overseas experience with those participating in orientation programs more often feeling prepared than those not attending orientations.

(12.) There was a positive relationship between amount traveled and increased understanding of life in the geographic regions visited.

(13.) The females reported a much greater increase in concern about terrorism than the males, although both indicated increases. The females reported a strong increase in concern twice as often as males. More research on gender is needed to isolate differences in how a study-abroad experience affects attitudes, beliefs, interests, awareness levels, values, and so on.

(14.) More research on the relationship between the amount of travel and different variables should be explored in light of this study. For example, Why do some students travel more than others? Are there predominantly economic reasons for the extent of travel or is it mainly because of variations in curiosity, self-confidence, motivation, opportunity or other factors? What methods of travel are

used most often--tour groups, dyads, open itinerary, etc.? Is a long-term relationship with an individual in a single host community a greater influence on variable changes than diverse sight-seeing travel to many locations? Generally, the former has been emphasized through host-family and international exchange programs.

(15.) Research is needed on the specific impact of international students on the richness of a study-abroad experience since this has been almost totally ignored by intercultural contact researchers.

(16.) More research is needed to compare orientation programs for study-abroad experiences in order to find the most effective approaches. This study suggests a combination of pre-experience orientation and processing sessions during the study-abroad experience may be advised.

(17.) Direction and intensity of variables can be determined through the approach used in this study, although further research and instrument refinements are indicated.

(18.) Ideally, an instrument would provide a way for the respondent to select directionality rather than this being preselected by the researcher. This could perhaps be accomplished by utilizing a bi-directional scale which would indicate movement toward and away from the selected variables.

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